

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1194

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

USNMR SHAPE

CINC USAF RAMSTEIN

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 13833

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, GW

SUBJECT: MRCA TORNADO ESPIONAGE CASE ESCALATING
TO POLITICAL LEVEL

1. BOTH THE SPD AND CDU HAVE NOW BECOME ENGAGED POLITICALLY IN THE MRCA TORNADO ESPIONAGE CASE. AS WIRE ITEMS HAVE INDICATED, THE CASE INVOLVED THE ATTEMPTED SALE OF MRCA CONSTRUCTION PLANS TO AN EASTERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE. THE STORY BROKE PUBLICLY ON AUGUST 16 WHEN "DIE WELT" REPORTED THAT THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE HAD ARRESTED A BELGIAN ARMS DEALER NAMED VALERIAN KUZNIAK ON JULY 29 AND A GERMAN ELECTRONICS ENGINEER NAMED MANFRED KNUFELMANN A FEW DAYS AGO. KUZNIAK WAS ALLEGEDLY APPREHENDED WHILE TURNING OVER THE DOCUMENTS TO AN UNIDENTIFIED THIRD PARTY.

2. STILL UNKNOWN IS THE IDENTITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN MESSERSCHMIDT-BOELKOW-BLOHM (MBB) WHO PROVIDED THE COMPUTER CONSTRUCTION DATA TO KUZNIAK. AN MBB PUBLIC
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AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN HAS ATTEMPTED TO PLAY DOWN THE STORY,

CLAIMING THAT NO GREAT SPY HUNT HAS BEEN UNLEASHED AT MBB HEADQUARTERS IN MUNICH. (COMMENT: THE GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATION AT MBB IS CONTINUING).

3. SPD DEPUTY KARL HEINZ HANSEN, A MEMBER OF THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE, FORMALLY ASKED THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY WHETHER REPORTS WERE ACCURATE THAT ABOUT SIXTY PERSONS AT MBB HAD ACCESS TO THE SECRET DOCUMENTS CONCERNING MRCA. ALSO, HANSEN WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THE FRG INTENDED TO PROCEED AGAINST MBB FOR ENDANGERING FRG SECURITY. FINALLY, HANSEN ASKED THE GOVERNMENT HOW THE NEGLIGENT HANDLING OF STATE SECRETS BY PRIVATE FIRMS COULD BE AVOIDED.

4. CDU DEPUTY KARL MILTNER HAS CALLED FOR AN "INTENSIVE" EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND EXPERTS TO COUNTERACT COMPUTER ESPIONAGE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. MILTNER CLAIMED THERE WERE LEGAL LOOPHOLES ON THIS SUBJECT, AND THAT ONLY THE FOREIGN ECONOMIC LAW SERVED SUCH A PURPOSE AT THE PRESENT TIME. MILTNER SAID THAT THE PROBLEM OF COMPUTER ESPIONAGE HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY UNDERESTIMATED IN THE FRG.

5. AN FMOD MRCA PROJECT OFFICE OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED THE MBB COMPUTER WAS TAPPED, BUT BELIEVES THAT THE THIEVES DID NOT GET TOO MUCH USEFUL INFORMATION. THE OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE DATA WOULD NOT BE VERY HELPFUL WITHOUT THE ENGINEERING DRAWINGS. THE OFFICIAL CONCLUDED THAT THE MRCA PROJECT HAD NOT BEEN JEOPARDIZED.

6. OTHER EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE ALSO INDICATED THAT THE INFORMATION OFFERED TO SOVIET INTELLIGENCE WAS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS PORTRAYED BY THE PRESS. WE WERE TOLD THE INFORMATION WAS EITHER OUT OF DATE OR PREVIOUSLY AVAILABLE THROUGH OPEN SOURCES.
HILLENBRAND

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